

EXECUTIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Online Zoom meeting

1300 - 1500 hours on Tuesday, 18 November 2025

MINUTES

Present:

| | |
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| Cllr Paul Cassidy | Inverclyde Council (Chair) |
| Cllr Peter Bradbury | Cardiff Council (part - from item 3.2) |
| Cllr Sue Smith | Rochdale Borough Council (part - until item 5.2) |
| Cllr Jacky Alty | South Ribble Borough Council |
| Cllr Barbara Brownridge | Oldham Council (Accountable Body) (part – until item 4.3) |
| Cllr John Fahy | Greenwich Coop Development Agency |

In Attendance:

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|-----------------|---|
| Jonathan Downs | Oldham Council (Accountable Body) (until 7.3) |
| Nicola Huckerby | CCIN (Minutes) |
| Pete Vallance | CCIN |
| Fiona Gibson | Cardiff Council (part) |

Apologies:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Cllr Jim Robbins | Swindon Borough Council (Chair) |
| Cllr Mili Patel | Brent Council (Chair of V&P) |
| Cllr Ernest Gibson | South Tyneside Council |
| Cllr Mike Stubbs | Newcastle-Under-Lyme Labour Group |

Absent:

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cllr Kelly Middleton | Telford & Wrekin Council |
| Cllr Shanika Mahendran | Milton Keynes City Council |

1. Introductions, welcome and apologies – Chair

- 1.1.** Cllr Jim Robbins joined the meeting from Downing Street to give thanks to Nicola Huckerby at this, her last EOC meeting as Chief Executive.
- 1.2.** In Cllr Robbins' absence, Cllr Paul Cassidy assumed the role of Chair.
- 1.3.** Cllr Cassidy read out a Statement reiterating the importance of members attending the formal meetings, particularly as the Network was facing some significant legal and structural changes. He also confirmed that non-attendance was being monitored. The complete statement is an Appendix to these minutes.
- 1.4.** Cllr Paul Cassidy paid tribute to all that NH had achieved over the last 9.5 years, in a very thought-provoking contribution, acknowledging the role NH had played in the growth of the CCIN, making it the fastest-growing network in local government.
- 1.5.** The chair welcomed Cllr Jacky Alty from South Ribble Council as the newest member of the EOC following the recent elections. She was already a friend of the network, having previously served as chair of the V&P Board and she held numerous community roles.
- 1.6.** Apologies and absences were noted. The meeting was inquorate.
Agreed: to proceed with the business, but noting that all decisions would require ratification from the whole Board before recommendations could be acted upon.

2. Minutes of the last meeting – online 8 September

Those present agreed that this was a correct record. However, because the meeting was inquorate, approval from other members was required.

Action: NH

3. Matters Arising from the meeting on 8 September (not already on the agenda)

3.1. Appointment to vacancies on the V&P Board – NH reported that three new members had been appointed to the Board:

Cllr Bradley Arnold – Halewood Town Council

David Randall – Crystalisr

Gareth Nash – Coop & Mutual Solutions – representing Worker Coops

3.2. Membership of Coop Press - NH explained that EOC had already agreed that the CCIN would become a member of Cooperative Press at a rate of £590 pa. This access would be provided through a link in a CCIN mailing to eligible members. It was noted that additional print copies of the magazine would be available to members for £35pa. These invoices would be settled directly with Coop News.

Agreed: to process the membership application with Coop News, providing member councils with access to the thenews.coop and to offer members the opportunity to access additional printed copies.

Action: NH and PV

3.3. NH reported that the Annual Review for 2024-5 had been circulated to all. The Chair and Cllr Fahy thanked her for compiling another excellent publication. The printed report would be circulated to Governance Members with the CCIN Christmas Card. And the digital version sent out to all members.

Action: NH

Other copies would be available at in-person events. The digital version would be circulated with the papers for the AGM, early in the new year.

Action: JD/PV

4. Finance and Budget Update

4.1. Finance & General Purposes Group feedback – Cllr Paul Cassidy gave an update on decisions taken/matters arising at the F&GPG meeting on 6 November that were not already on this agenda. These included:

i The appointment of Cllr Jacky Alty as Vice Chair

ii All invoices for 2024/5 had been settled

iii Some members had already paid invoices for 2025/6 and there was a full report on this agenda. JD had been asked to look at ways of allowing F&GPG members to access payment updates in real time.

Action: JD/PV

4.1a Proposal to review and revise Associate and Affiliate Membership fees – Cllr Paul Cassidy shared a report that had been considered at the F&GPG meeting

Agreed: A financial impact report would be considered at the next meeting, with a view to reviewing membership fees ahead of each AGM.

Action: JD

4.2. Budget Update - Jonathan Downs reported that Barking and Dagenham Council had withdrawn from the Network and that Tamworth Borough Council had joined. It was noted that the Conference Budget line had been reduced to zero as the event would take

place online. However, a small budget may be required.

Cllr Fahy asked why LBBB had withdrawn. It was noted that Cllr Robbins had agreed to follow up with the Deputy Leader.

Agreed: Cllr Fahy to follow up with his contacts at LBBB.

Action: Cllr Robbins to follow up with Deputy Leader at LBBB.

Cllr Fahy offered to pursue the opportunity to organise an event with the London Cooperative Party to encourage more London Councils to join the Network.

Action: Cllr Fahy

Cllr Cassidy asked whether the Network benefited from the Local Authority VAT exemption on goods and services purchased. JD responded that the CCIN didn't currently benefit as a Network, and that monies claimed back from CCIN expenditure were put into the Oldham 'pot' because it was too complicated to re-apportion them.

Agreed: that this should be added to the SWOT analysis.

Action: Fiona Gibson.

Cllr Cassidy asked that an additional budget line be added to differentiate restricted and unrestricted reserves. The former should be kept for expenditure incurred if the organisation needs to be wound up.

Action: JD/Cllr Cassidy to discuss.

- 4.3. Membership Fees Update** – Jonathan Downs reported a positive response from Full Members regarding payments. He noted that reminders would now be sent weekly by email instead of fortnightly, as the year-end payment deadline approaches.

A position statement on the budget will be circulated to EOC before the end of November.

Action: JD

- 4.4. Multi-year Membership Discounts** – Jonathan Downs explained that the F&GPG group was considering offering Full Member Councils a 5% discount on fees for paying three years in advance. The discount would not be available to those councils that already benefited from discounted rates, either because they were within a member Combined Authority area or because they received the Shared Services discount. JD had prepared a draft paper for which he was seeking final approval before circulating it to EOC for comments.

Action: JD

- 4.5. Ad hoc payment mechanism** – Jonathan Downs explained that Oldham was investigating ways to pay for the products and services used by the Network that were currently paid for by Nicola Huckerby and reimbursed. This might be via a PO and/or on a multi-year basis, directly with the supplier.

Action: JD/James Mulvaney

Cllr Cassidy noted that the CRM will need to be added to this list.

5. Taskforce on the future of the CCIN

- 5.1. Task List Update** – Cllr Paul Cassidy gave an update on the actions.

NH explained that the Legal Constitution Group and F&GPG had agreed to park the discussions on whether the Network should change its legal status to a cooperative until after the results of May's elections were known and the full CCIN staffing complement was in place.

Cllr John Fahy asked how the CCIN was responding to the Pride in Place funding and whether we can do more.

Action: Cllr Smith offered to circulate a paper on Rochdale's approach to this funding
Agreed: to have this as a substantive item for the next meeting.

5.2. Recruitment update – Cllr Paul Cassidy gave an update on the progress since the last meeting. It had been hoped that we would have appointed two new members of staff before now; however, some difficulties had been encountered with the procurement process at Oldham Council.

Some interim options have been put forward, and these are being worked through.

Action: There is an existing delegated authority for Cllrs Robbins and Cllr Cassidy to make decisions on recruitment between meetings.

5.3. CRM update and System costs – Pete Vallance provided a position statement on the Zoho One platform. All member data has now been uploaded.

Agreed: to purchase two full Zoho One user accounts for hello@councils.coop and comms@councils.coop, with a third to be added for the Accountable Body in early 2026.

The monthly licence cost is £37 per user - £444 per annum. The new CRM could save costs elsewhere in the budget: Mailchimp, Zoom and Gravity Forms.

Because the meeting was inquorate, approval from other members was required.

Action: PV

5.4. Service Level Agreement draft targets – Cllr Paul Cassidy reminded members that at the September meeting, all members were asked to consider Metrics for inclusion in the SLA between the CCIN and Oldham Council. No comments had been received, so PC had prepared draft targets which were now with Oldham for consideration and discussion at the next meeting.

Action: JD to review and commit on targets and submit a final version for agreement at the next F&GPG & EOC.

5.5. DPS Review and member session – Jonathan Downs updated on the ongoing review of the DPS. He confirmed that The member session will take place on Tuesday, 13 January. Details to be circulated in the December newsletter.

Action: JD/NH

5.6. Legal Subgroup – Cllr Paul Cassidy gave an overview of the extensive work that has been delivered as part of this project to explore options for changing the Network's legal structure. There are two outstanding items:

i Draft SWOT

Agreed: To ask Mike to update progress at the next meeting with a view to agreeing this.

ii Legal Advice update – PC reported that he had met with colleagues at Anthony Collins and that the project cost had not differed significantly from the original quote, despite the work completed. The legal advisors had agreed to provide a fresh quote to manage the process of changing the CCIN legal structure into a cooperative once all the elements of the project had been completed.

Action: MS/PC

PC thanked Fiona Gibson for all the work that she had done to manage the delivery of the varying parts of this project.

6. Membership Update

6.1. Membership list – NH informed members that the latest membership list is always available on the website for [download here](#).

6.2. Membership update: NH reported that there are now 138 Members and Supporters.

Agreed: To ratify the following member applications

- Middlesbrough Council (Full Member)
- Tamworth Borough Council (Full Member)
- Cornwall Labour & Coop Group (Associate Member)
- Causeway Creative (Affiliate Member)
- Debbie Williams (Supporter)

Because the meeting was inquorate, approval from other members was required.

Action: NH

7. Milestones for 2026

7.1. Case Studies Pack 2026

Agreed: Approve the production of the 2026 Case Studies Pack based on previous editions.

- <https://www.councils.coop/membership/members-pack/>The delivery team working with COOP News to produce the 2026 Case Studies Pack will be: Pete Vallance, Jonathan Downs (encouraging councils to submit), and COOP Brand Ltd. Cllr Cassidy offered to help.
- Encourage all members to submit Case Studies throughout the year on anything that could be of interest to other members.
- Deadline for submission of Case Studies is 13 March 2026.
- NH to provide introductions for her successor to the team at COOP News.

7.2. Launch of Policy Labs and Prototype Funding

NH shared a timetable for Policy Project funding for 2025/6.

Agreed:

10 – 12 February 2026 - Launch at Annual Conference

16 March 2026 - Closing date for submission of all Bids

w/b 23 March 2026 - EOC & V&P Board consider Bids

30 March – 10 April 2026 - Bidders are asked to respond to any further questions raised by Governance

w/b 13 April 2026 - Sign-off of successful bids by V&P (meeting)

w/b 20 April 2026 - Budgets signed off by EOC (via email)

w/b 15 June 2026 - Contracts awarded/work starts

7.3 Events Calendar

Agreed:

- That CCIN book a stand and a fringe event at the Labour Local Government Conference on 8-9 February. Exhibition space is £1000 + VAT. Breakout session is £900 + VAT. And that a representative of the CCIN core team should staff this event and organise the Fringe.
Action: NH to book stand
Action: JR/PC to agree attendance and Fringe content
- Agree that discussions should be held with the Labour Exhibitions Team to coordinate a CCIN stand space at the 2026 Labour Party Conference. Budget availability to be checked with JD and costs are to be approved by EOC before booking. The CCIN core team should staff this event.
Action: NH.
Action: JR/PC to agree attendance.
- Approve the outline of the Annual Conference 2025-6:
NH shared an option for the Annual Conference: **Celebration of Cooperative Innovation** – a series of five/six online sessions promoting different Policy Labs and

active learning over one week from 10 – 12 February 2026. This would also support the strategic objective of 'Deeper not Wider', as we seek to engage more officers and members from member councils in the Network's work. Ideas suggested:

- Pitch your Policy Lab an opportunity for members to pitch their policy lab ideas
- Councils Coop Development Toolkit - Kirklees
- Coop Option Training
- Social Value Toolkit for Councils
- Local Govt Review
- Pride in Place programme
- The LGA exhibition space has been booked.
Action: JR/PC/JD to identify someone to organise accommodation for the staff team as soon as possible.
- NH to provide introductions for her successor to event organisers.

Because the meeting was inquorate, approval from other members was required.

Action: NH/PV/JD

8. Schedule of future meetings:

- Late January/early February 2026
Action: 27th January was suggested - PV to check with the Chair's diary
- 10 – 12 February Annual Conference and AGM
- w/b 23 March – Joint meeting with V&P to consider Policy Project Bids

9. Any Other Urgent Business

There was none.

Meeting Attendance and Engagement

Before we begin, I want to take a moment to speak about something fundamental to the strength, credibility, and effectiveness of our organisation: attendance and meaningful engagement at EOC meetings.

Each of us was elected or appointed because members across the UK trust us to represent them, to act on their behalf, and to contribute actively to the direction of this network. That trust is a responsibility — and it doesn't end once we've taken our seat. It's something we must continue to earn, meeting by meeting, decision by decision.

As you know, the board has recently strengthened our attendance policy. This is not about box ticking, nor is it meant to be punitive. It's about ensuring that our board remains active, accountable, and responsive. And let me remind you: if a member misses two meetings in a calendar year, it automatically triggers a review of their position on this board. That safeguard exists to protect the integrity of our work and the trust our members place in us.

Participation isn't simply about being in the room. It means engaging with the papers, offering viewpoints, contributing ideas, scrutinising proposals, challenging constructively, and supporting one another. Every voice here matters — not just for diversity of opinion, but because our members deserve to have their perspectives heard through us. Silence and absence are not neutral; they have consequences.

We all understand that life happens — work pressures, personal commitments, and unexpected challenges. But if attending meetings and contributing to discussion is no longer a commitment we can uphold, then we must be honest with ourselves and with this board about that reality.

We owe our members an active, present, and responsible board. Anything less risks undermining their trust and our collective purpose. This board can only function at its best when every member plays their part. We should aspire to be a model of the values we promote: responsibility, transparency, participation, and respect.

So going forward, I ask each of you to reflect on your commitment to this board.

Because when we are fully engaged, we are stronger together — and our members deserve nothing less.

ClIr Paul Cassidy

Vice Chair – EOC

Vice-Convener – Environment & Regeneration (Environment)

Community Council Champion – Inverclyde Council